



NEWS

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Interagency Seamless Network Summit

*Building a Seamless Network of the Nation's Ocean and Coastal Refuges,
Reserves, Parks and Sanctuaries*

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- A General Agreement was signed yesterday between the Department of the Interior and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to increase the coordination of Parks, Sanctuaries, Reserves, and Refuges in their efforts to develop a seamless network to protect and conserve the nation's ocean and coastal refuges, reserves, parks and sanctuaries.

“The General Agreement mandates that we work together to protect these invaluable natural and cultural resources, said Kameran Onley, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior.” “We will now be more effective in our ability to attain greater results through the exchange of agency resources.”

“We have today taken an important step in implementing the President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan, said Tim Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce.” “Our increased coordination will mean better management and protection of some very special marine and coastal areas both in the immediate future and for generations to come.”

The National Park System, the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, and the National Wildlife Refuge System conserve a rich assemblage of coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resources located from above the Arctic Circle to below the Equator in both hemispheres. The President's U.S. Ocean Action Plan charged these programs to better manage special marine and coastal areas in this nation. When implemented, the Seamless Network agreement will facilitate and enhance scientific understanding and conservation of coastal and marine resources, and increase coordination with state, public, and private partners.

Although they were created under separate authorities, these programs share similar resource management concerns. The result of this agreement will be greater operational and administrative efficiencies. It will include expanded partnerships among Parks, Refuges, Sanctuaries, and Reserves where they overlap or adjoin each other, and where they address similar issues of conservation and management.

During the first year of this agreement, plans will be developed to address priorities identified in the agreement. In addition, regional workshops will be conducted to identify local priorities and projects, consistent with the areas of focus in the agreement. Agencies will explore how to coordinate and facilitate the financial and administrative process to allow a timely transfer of funds, and effective sharing of facilities, vessels, equipment, personnel and other resources.

The agreement complements the Executive Order 13158 which calls for a national system of marine protected areas and with Executive Order 13352 on cooperative conservation.

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